Wireless Services Weekly

Moby Dick   **A New Technician for Southwest Utah**   **Competition, for Better or Worse?**
UWIN Looks to Broadband Wireless   **Calendar**

Moby Dick

By Doug Chandler and Jeff Stork
(Herman Melvil was not available)

Call me Ishmael. Box Elder County just purchased a whale of a command vehicle. Don't let the less-than-exciting solid white coloring fool you. In the words of Melvil: *"A noble craft, but somehow a most melancholy! All noble things are touched with that."*

Box Elder Command Vehicle

The 34 foot leviathan was purchased from Dodgen Industries, and is equipped as follows:

♦   4 Dispatch Positions, plus 911 call-taker position

♦   700 MHZ IPMobileNet Mobile Data System

♦   800 MHZ Motorola MCS2000 radios

♦   (4) UHF Bendix King radios

♦   (4) VHF Bendix King radios

♦   (4) VHF Kenwood TK790 radios

♦   VHF/UHF Kenwood TM-D700A Amateur Dual-band

♦   JPS ACU-1000 Interoperability Device

♦   Globalstar Satellite w/phone, fax, and internet

♦   Surveillance camera on hydroidic camera boom

♦   Automatic hydriodic self leveling set up system
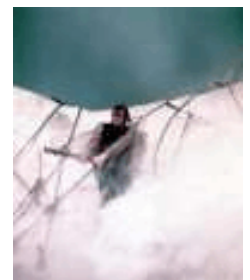
♦   Twin 7KW propane generators

Interior View

Jeff Stork Installs Antenna

Box Elder County is having Qwest set up two locations (one in Brigham City, one in Tremonton,) where this vehicle and its remote phone system can plug into the county-wide 911 public safety answering system. Box Elder's Chief Deputy, Lynn Yeates, noted that the command center is a joint project between several agencies in the region. The dilemma of who's agency gets to put stickers on the side is yet to be addressed. For now, it will keep a low profile (which has it's own advantages). As I recall, things didn't end up so well for Ahab when he tried to stick things on the side of the original Moby Dick.

A New Technician for Southwest Utah

By Doug Chandler

Loren Lamoreaux officially starts as the new tech in the State Radio Shop in Cedar City next Monday. Loren has spent the last year in our Salt Lake Install Bay, where he's exhibited an exceptional quality and quantity of work.

At least now Trevor Pollock (our current Cedar City resident radio tech) can stop telling me how overworked he is (just kidding Trev). With the expanding role that wireless plays in the delivery of services by our public employees, it's getting harder to get by with single tech in our regional offices.

Loren Lamoreaux

I received my break to join the team when Gunnison Prison was constructed back in 1990, and our Richfield microwave tech, Al Higgs, said the additional load of the prison rated another radio tech position in the area. I recall the excitement at the possibility that I might be hired by the state to be a field tech. In the interview, I gave it my very best. I was sure it must have been a close call with the hundreds of other applicants that surely put in for the position. Years later my boss informed me that there was only one other interview that was scheduled, but he had to cancel because his request for parole was denied. Maybe I ran into him while servicing radios at Gunnison.

Competition, for Better or Worse?

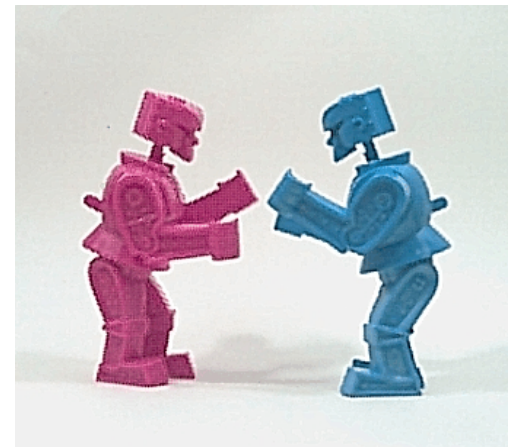By Boyd Webb, Strategic Network Planner

If there is one thing I have come to understand in the past decade, it is that competition can accelerate, or stifle, growth opportunities in the advancement of technology. End users often suffer delays in critical progress because suppliers and vendors place a higher priority on the business end of turning a profit, than on working with rival competitors to advance technology in general.

Competition occasionally spurs much needed innovation, but more often leads to hard fought 'winner-take-all' defensive strategies that eliminate competitors and ideas. Defending the status quo often includes the elimination of ideas that could advance and improve the status quo itself. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" may produce a more stable technological environment in the short run, but it doesn't do much for long term growth and progress.

Many of the business methods deployed by competing corporations are designed to eliminate competition and establish virtual monopolies. The rise and continued success of companies like Microsoft, Motorola, and Cisco, demonstrate how technology is both advanced and stifled by the giants of the industry. The bottom line in business is profit, not necessarily building a better world for the consumer.

Fortunately wireless voice and data networking technologies are becoming increasingly immune to the proprietary business interests of a few giants. Open standards and the availability of infrastructure are opening new doors of opportunity for technology innovators.
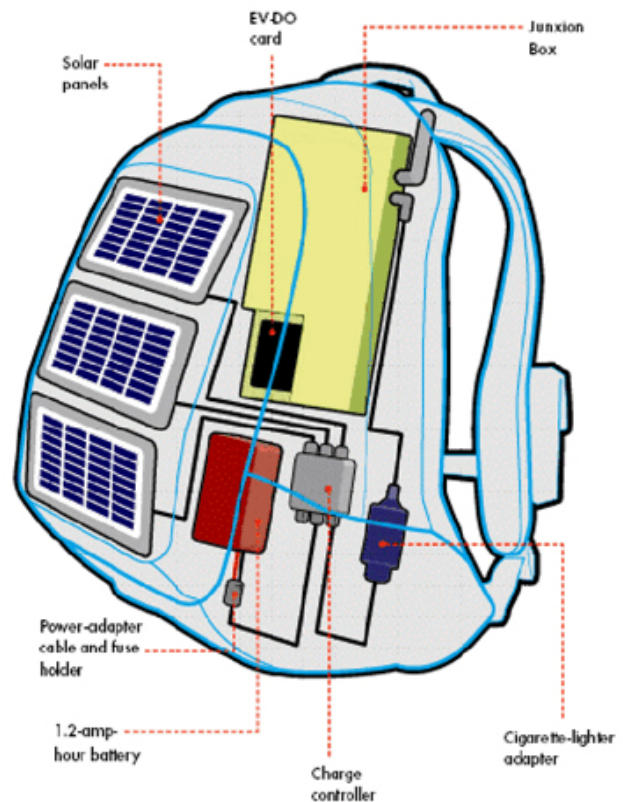
One of many innovative wireless networking solutions that can be implemented by anyone is the "Backpack Hotspot" presented on page 92 in the August 2005 edition of Popular Science magazine.

The opportunities for wireless networking while hiking in the mountains may be limited, but it doesn't take much imagination to come up with a list of reasons to construct the device. And with opportunity comes a whole new way of thinking about networking.

Network specialists working for the Washington County Sheriff's office last year designed and implemented a vehicular mobile data router that, like the backpack hotspot, benefits from the convergence of disparate networking technologies in a single device. The concept, while not new, was again proven in several field demonstrations in Utah. The device was constructed using readily available components purchased at Radio Shack and a local office supply store.

Meanwhile, the competing giants of technology may be unaware of the changing paradigm wherein technicians and consumers are empowered with the ability to implement enterprise networking solutions without the costly proprietary and often inferior solutions now on the table.

UWIN Looks to Broadband Wireless
By Doug Chandler

Last Friday August 12th, the UWIN Governance Board met to discuss, among other things, what might be done to initiate a statewide effort for a broadband wireless solution. The longer the discussion went on, the more everyone began to realize the overwhelming scope of such a project. Are we to use public or leverage the state's private WAN? Do we roll out a vendor's product, or simply identify a common set of standards to ensure interoperability? Do we use 802.11? Wi-Max? Wi-Fi? Why me? Do we bring in a consultant to ensure full-time attention to the project? What about large geographic coverage vs high-speed (yes, they tend to oppose each other)? Then there's finance, security, performance, licensed vs unlicensed spectrum, availability of inexpensive fiber, and a whole host of other details that are still not even identified.

Though daunting, it's a task worth undertaking. Every time an agency purchases a new wireless solution, it's sure to be incompatible with their neighboring agency. Isn't in the best interests of taxpayers to ensure we're not spending their dollars on communications technologies that don't communicate with each other? That may sound like an easy "yes!", but years of experience has taught me that by the time a ubiquitous solution is implemented, it is frequently years behind current technologies, expensive to the end users, and offensive to those who feel forced to follow it.

I appreciated one in attendance (I can't remember who) who made the comment that we should pick what we feel is a good solution, build a successful pilot, and people will come. Then he walked off into the corn field and disappeared.

Calendar

UWIN Governance Board Meeting
10:00am - Noon
Friday September 16, 2005
State Office Building, Room 5112

UWIN Technology Steering Committee
Friday September 4, 2005
10:00am - Noon
UHP Large Conference Room
4501 South 2700 West

UCAN Meeting
Tuesday September 20, 2005
2:00 - 4:00 pm
VECC
5360 South 5885 West
Salt Lake City

911 Committee
Thursday September 15, 2005
10:00am - Noon
Rampton Complex
4501 South 2700 West
UHP Large Conference Room

Utah Sheriff's Association 10th Annual Conference and Exposition
St. George Dixie Center
September 11-13
Conference Link